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COMMUNICATION

To the Managing Editor of the HISPANIC AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW:
Sir:

On reading Prof. Justin H. Smith's admirable recent book *The War with Mexico*, I was surprised to find that, notwithstanding the exhaustive nature of his work, he omitted to publish the texts of two extremely important and interesting documents, limiting himself to quoting a sentence from each.

For the benefit of the readers of THE HISPANIC AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW who, like myself, delight in reading original documents, I subjoin the text of the "Declaration of War with Mexico" by President Polk, followed by the text of the "Confidential Circular" sent by Secretary of State James Buchanan to American diplomatic and consular agents abroad enclosing a copy of the war proclamation.

ZELIA NUTTALL.

By the President of the United States of America

A PROCLAMATION

Whereas the Congress of the United States, by virtue of the constitutional authority vested in them, have declared by their act, bearing date this day, that, "by the act of the Republic of Mexico, a state of war exists between that Government and the United States". Now, therefore, I James K. Polk, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the same to all whom it may concern: and I do specially enjoin on all persons holding offices, civil or military, under the authority of the United States, that they be vigilant and zealous in discharging the duties respectively incident thereto: and I do moreover exhort all the good people of the United States, as they love their country, as they feel the wrongs which have forced them on the last resort of injured nations, and as they consult the best means, under the blessings of Divine Providence, of abridging its calamities, that they exert themselves in preserving order, in Promoting concord, in maintaining the authority and efficacy of the laws, and in supporting and invigorating all the measures which may be adopted by the constituted authorities for obtaining a speedy, a just, and an honorable peace.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed to these presents. Done at the City of Washington the thirteenth day of May, one thousand eight hundred and forty-six, and of the independence of the United States the seventieth.

(Signed) JAMES K. POLK

By the President

(Signed) JAMES BUCHANAN, Secretary of State

(CONFIDENTIAL CIRCULAR)

Department of State
Washington, May 14th, 1846.

Sir:

I transmit to you, herewith a proclamation of the President, of yesterday's date, declaring that war exists between the United States and Mexico. Congress adopted the measure with unprecedented unanimity. On the passage of the "Act providing for the prosecution of the existing war between the United States and Mexico", there were but fourteen dissenting votes in the House, and two in the Senate. The truth is that we had endured so many insults and grievous wrongs from Mexico with such unexampled patience, that at the last she must have mistaken our forbearance for pusillanimity. Encouraged, probably, by this misapprehension, her army has at length passed the Del Norte—has invaded the territory of our country—and had shed American blood upon the American soil.

The vote in Congress will serve to convince the world, that, in this country, at a crisis, when it becomes necessary to assert the national rights, and vindicate the national honor, all party distinctions vanish. You will observe from the President's message, a copy of which is enclosed, the extreme reluctance with which the United States have engaged in this war. It is our interest, as it has ever been our inclination, that Mexico should be an independent and powerful Republic, and that our relations with her should be of the most friendly character. The successive revolutions by which she has been afflicted, and the avaricious and unprincipled men who have placed themselves at the head of the government, have brought her to the brink of ruin. We feel deeply interested that she should establish a stable Government sufficiently powerful and pacific to prevent and punish aggressions upon her neighbors. For some years, in our intercourse with her, we have incurred much of the expense, and suffered many of the inconveniences of war, whilst nominally at peace. This state of things had at last become intolerable.

We go to war with Mexico solely for the purpose of conquering an honorable and permanent peace. Whilst we intend to prosecute the war with vigor, both by land and sea, we shall bear the olive branch in one hand, and the sword in the other; and whenever she will accept the former, we shall sheath the latter.

A strict blockade of the ports of Mexico, both on the Atlantic and Pacific will be immediately established.

In conversing on the objects and purposes of the war, you will be guided by the sentiments expressed in the President's message and this despatch. I am, sir, respectfully,

Your obedient servant
(Signed) JAMES BUCHANAN